

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the application identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 24 and 25 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims (Official Action at page 8).

By the above amendments, claims 1-5, 7-23, 26 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 24 and 25 have been amended to be in independent form. New claims 28-37 directly or indirectly depend from claim 24 and are directed to subject matter of original claims 2-4, 7-9, 12, 19, 22 and 23, respectively. New claims 38-53 directly or indirectly depend from claim 25 and are directed to subject matter of original claims 2-4, 7-15, 18, 19, 22 and 23, respectively.

Entry of the above amendments is proper at least because they place the application either in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. See M.P.E.P. §714.12. As well, Applicants thank Examiner Chung for his time and consideration in discussing the present application with Applicants' representative on March 16, 2004. At the conclusion of such discussion, the Examiner indicated that he would enter and consider the above amendments at this stage of prosecution.

In light of the Examiner's indication that claims 24 and 25 contain allowable subject matter, and that each of claims 28-53 directly or indirectly depends from claim 24 or claim 25, it is believed that claims 24, 25 and 28-53 are now in condition for allowance. Indication of the allowance of such claims is respectfully requested.

In the Official Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-15 and 17-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,340,404 (*Oka et al*) in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,383,620 (*Aoyama et al*). Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Oka et al* in further view of SID Digest 1998 (*Kurata*). Claims 7 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Oka et al* in further view of *Aoyama et al* and U.S. Patent No. 5,759,643 (*Miyashita et al*). Claims 26 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Document No. 11-006902. Without addressing the propriety of the above rejections, it is apparent that such rejections are moot in light of the cancellation of claims 1-5, 7-23, 26 and 27, and withdrawal of the above rejections is respectfully requested.

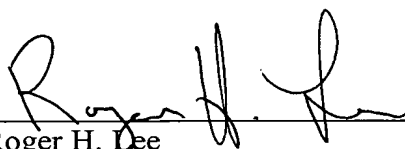
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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